

**STRIKE
SPECIAL**

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CAEN
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**New
threat to
Summerskill
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gets tough
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Sad, bitter, outrageous

There is but one word to use for the San Francisco press blackout: outrageous. It is outrageous that San Francisco must go, as long as it has and as long as it probably will, without a major daily newspaper.

Perhaps it was inevitable, as our front-page labor analysis argues forcefully; the 1965 merger (approved by President Johnson's Justice Department under suspicious circumstances never fully explained) . . . the publishers' plans to maximize profits without much of a trickle-down prospectus for unions . . . the difficulty of bargaining with a management whose profits are safely hidden in private corporations . . . Hearst's union-smashing putsch in Los Angeles . . . the intransigence of the unions in dealing with automation and their failure to put to-

gether progressive automation programs as did Harry Bridges for the longshoremen.

Sadly, the last thing either side seems to be interested in is putting out the great newspaper that San Francisco has for so long deserved.

The public has a stake in the daily publication of monopoly papers, just as it does in the publication of strong, competitive papers. The latter it now can't do much about, the former it can.

If the strike continues much longer, and both sides remain bitterly dug in in World War I trenches, there seems to be only one thing to insist upon: that management and the unions should be forced to submit to compulsory and binding arbitration—in their interest and in the public interest.



Guardian photos by Hank Meals

Escorted by policemen, Scott Newhall, the Chronicle's executive editor, exchanges words with hostile union pickets then, smiling weakly, slips inside office



After the merger, it was inevitable

By our correspondent

It had been coming for nearly 2-1/2 years, and no one could -- or would -- stop it. It was inevitable. San Franciscans were foredoomed to the strike that cut off their daily newspapers on January 5 for the first time in more than a century.

It appears, too, that they won't see the papers again for several weeks -- perhaps months. After months and months of bitter, inconclusive struggle, publishers and newspaper unions aren't likely to suddenly kiss and makeup, even though the pickets are marching.

They're picketing in behalf of the Mailers Union -- men and women from all 11 of the other unions represented at the papers. But they're not merely supporting a mailers' strike; they're not just fighting a mailers versus publishers battle.

They feel they are waging an all-union battle to alter plans laid out by San Francisco's newspaper publishers late in 1965 -- plans neither designed to improve the lot of any union members nor to put out better newspapers for the public.

It was back there in 1965 that their battle really began, when the Hearst Corporation, master of a national chain specializing in "yellow journalism," joined in a once highly improbable alliance with the DeYoung family, which had boasted for years that its morning Chronicle was "the city's only home-owned newspaper."

They formed The San Francisco Newspaper Printing Company, then killed Hearst's afternoon News Call-Bulletin and switched Hearst's morning Examiner into that spot. The Chronicle would be the city's only morning paper, The Examiner its only afternoon paper -- except on Sundays, when readers would get a morning Hodge-podge called The Examiner-Chronicle.

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The strikers who are torn by doubts

Solidarity forever? It's not that solid.

Factions split the 3,000 members of 12 unions who on Jan. 5 closed down operations of The Chronicle and The Examiner, and of their mechanical component, the San Francisco Newspaper Printing Company.

There are those who strike grudgingly. There is a silent minority.

If the strike drags on (and a long strike appears possible) these factions will, inevitably, rise to the surface, like a sour yeast in the batter.

STUBBORN MANAGEMENT

Failure of the very stubborn and short-sighted officers of the Print-

ing Company to arrive at a contract with Mailers Union Local 18 precipitated the strike. But the appearance of what was euphemistically billed as an "informational picket line" from Los Angeles Herald-Examiner unions gave it the necessary impetus.

In essence, it is a mailers' strike, the date of which was set by pickets from outside the city. Mailers Local 18 is a small union -- their strike vote, 141-to-9 -- but they are backed by all the juice and archaic trade-union prestige of their parent, the International Typographical Union. And that's plenty.

Numerically, the largest of the 11 unions supporting the mailers (in labor parlance this is curi-

ously called "a strike-lockout") is the San Francisco-Oakland Newspaper Guild.

Most if not all of the 900 Guild strikers are decent people, men and women of goodwill. This of course includes the Guild's leaders, who regard the strike with a kind of jubilation. It has given meaning to their long hours in stuffy rooms. It is the Second Coming.

DOUBTING GUILDSMEN

Some Guildsmen, however, and no doubt some members of other unions, find themselves torn by doubts:

On the one hand is an ancient loyalty to the labor movement-- wage stiff hanging together; on

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the other hand is a concern that the labor movement has grown conservative, that it ignores the central issues of our time, these being the Vietnam War and the Black Revolution.

Not only ignores these issues but often, distressingly, is on the

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THE BIG STRIKE... THE BIG STRIKE... THE BIG STRIKE... THE BIG ST

Nobody cared about better papers

— continued from page 1

All would be published by the new company. Editorial work would be separate, but all other functions -- mechanical operations, advertising, circulation and the like -- would be merged and run by the jointly-owned Printing Company.

San Francisco's long-suffering newspaper readers hardly benefited. The Examiner remained as dull, reactionary and Hearstian as it had been in the mornings -- picking up, moreover, the sloppy, slap-dash habits of the defunct News Call-Bulletin.

The Chronicle retained its position as one of the country's more liberal, sprightly and well-written papers, but still far too short on solid information and investigatory reporting.

Both papers had the talent and resources to do much, much better. But they hadn't merged in the interest of better newspapers. The goal was maximum profits and, with competition wiped out, the money rolled in. Neither readers nor advertisers had anywhere else to go, so why change?

The newspaper unions didn't show much concern for the readers either -- not even the Newspaper Guild, whose members include the reporters. Theoretically, at least, they worry about things beyond mere bread and butter.

The unions did take some perfunctory and belated steps to attack the merger on anti-trust grounds. But even that was prompted mainly by concern that their members would lose jobs after the merger. They were right, and they have been fighting ever since to see that no more jobs are lost, and to get the greatest possible share of the new profits.

The unions were aware that the merger would not be completed until the Printing Company also completed its joint headquarters -- remodeling the Chronicle Building at Fifth and Mission Sts. and adding a new annex in the rear.

It was there that all the merger plans finally would be carried out. New equipment to produce more with less employees would be set

up; profits would reach their maximum.

But what of the unions? They could spoil the plans; they could cut into the new profits. This was especially so for the three largest unions -- the 900-member Guild; 475-member International Typographical Union, and 700-member Newspaper and Periodical Drivers, a powerful Teamster affiliate.

They had to be held down, and they had to be held down in 1968. For that was when plans were to go into operation, and the year when the contracts of the three unions were up for re-negotiation -- the Guild in September, the ITU in November and the drivers in December.

But first came the little Mailers Union, an ITU affiliate whose 150 members bundle and otherwise prepare papers for distribution as they roll off the presses. Its contract expired in March, 1967. If it got what it wanted in a new contract, others would expect the same treatment in 1968.

"If we're a pushover for the Mailers Union," a printing company officer explained candidly to negotiators, "the three big ones will think it's pretty easy."

Obviously, it hasn't been easy for the mailers. They negotiated with the company for almost a year, long after their old contract expired.

The company knew the mailers would not accept, across the bargaining table, its plans for mailer operations in the new headquarters building. Doug Smith, Mailers

Union president, contended, "they'd just about wipe us out." He's exaggerating, but not much.

Rather than compromise, however, the company stalled mailer negotiations. Company officials hoped to complete the building this year while still negotiating, then institute their plans unilaterally. They presumably felt this would give the mailers no choice but to accept the new operations, because the other unions would not allow the mailers to call a strike that also would idle their 2,700 members.

But the other unions had some thoughts about "pushovers" too.

"If the newspaper publishers can push some of us around," they argue on a handbill being distributed on the picket lines, "they can push all of us around."

The other unions feared, in short, what the Printing Company's plans might hold for them. They didn't know, and still don't know, but they got a good idea from the company proposals to the mailers.

For one thing, they call for reducing the number of mailers now at work by as much as 25 per cent. Yet they would increase the output of papers to 70,000 an hour on the new press in the headquarters building, from the current output of 40,000 an hour on old Examiner presses and 60,000 an hour on Chronicle presses.

The union, quite naturally, calls it an attempted "speedup" and demands retention of all mailers now working. The Printing Company claims more efficiency on the new press requires reduced manpower and, quite naturally, accuses the union of attempted "featherbedding."

As in all such arguments, it's virtually impossible to determine who's right and who's wrong. But the union does claim to have experience on its side. It points out that the San Jose Mercury-News installed equipment similar to that planned at the Printing Company, and has found it needs more mailers than they're calling for in San Francisco.

The company offered no special protection for the men who would lose their jobs under its proposals; it did not even try to buy union approval of offering a substantial pay raise to those who would remain at work. In fact, it would curtail the overtime pay commonly earned by many mailers.

Probably more important to the union is a proposal that would allow the company to hire anyone it liked. They would have to join the union after 30 days, but the company no longer would have to hire only apprentices and journeymen sent by the union. Those currently-employed mailers who would lose their jobs, that is, would not even be guaranteed a chance for re-hiring.

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After the merger

—continued from page 2

The most basic of the other issues in dispute:

WAGES -- The mailers, now paid \$144 for a five-day, 35-hour work week plus \$1 for any night shift, want \$22 a week more in a two-year contract, plus \$2.16 per night shift. The company wants to give them \$17 more in a three-year contract plus \$1.20 for night work.

HOURS -- The company wants to extend the late night shift by a half-hour with no pay increase, and to remove the contract provision that a man work at least three hours before he is sent to lunch. It also wants to cut the number of hours of rest required between shifts to a flat eight hours. (Mailers now get at least 12 hours on weekdays, nine on Fridays and eight on Saturdays, and are paid at overtime rates if they get less.)

FRINGE BENEFITS -- The Union, whose members now get four weeks of paid vacation after 12 years experience, asked for four weeks after a year's experience, the same as granted regular ITU members at the papers. The company offered four weeks after seven years.

There are about 40 issues in all, including a demand by the company

that the mailers be allowed to honor only the picket lines of the Typographical Union. Obviously, this would keep the mailers from giving other newspaper unions the support the mailers now are getting, and the unions see it as part of a move to destroy their unity.

Whatever the specific issues, the fight clearly boils down to this: A struggle by publishers to reap the greatest return from the merger that ended real newspaper competition in San Francisco and paved the way for new and bigger profits. From their viewpoint, the merger will be a success only if their plans are realized; the merger was meant to institute certain cost-cutting, union-weakening operations.

The unions are fighting, of course. They will not stand by while the publishers take unilateral actions that will weaken them and minimize the share of their hardly affluent members in the new money.

The stakes are large. How large is known only to those who have seen the publishers' well-guarded financial records. Clearly, they are large enough for the publishers to take a strike; and large enough for 2,900 men and women to leave their jobs and, except for a favored

few reporters and columnists who can turn to radio and television, attempt to live on strike benefits of no more than \$100 a week, for those who get them at all.

Their strike had to come, and it was a dispute at Hearst's Los Angeles Herald-Examiner that finally kicked it off. Mailers had warned it might come on January 5 and, when Newspaper Guild pickets from Los Angeles appeared at the Chronicle building that day, the decision was made.

The mailers and other local newspaper unions decided to honor the Los Angeles Guild's picket lines. They were "informational" -- to advertise that Hearst had replaced union workers in Los Angeles with non-union strike-breakers and was publishing a paper even though all regular employees had walked off the job in response to a Guild strike.

But, though "informational" picket lines cannot legally be honored by unions, they can be honored by union members, as an act of individual conscience. San Francisco newspaper union members did just this, clearly in line with the informal wishes of their officers, and most certainly in line with the wishes of "informational" pickets who stood at entrances all day, roughly threatening anyone who tried to enter the newspaper buildings.

That evening, the inevitable happened. Local newspaper unions knew the out-of-town pickets would be gone soon and, rather than send everyone back to work and then call them out later, they moved immediately. They replaced the Los Angeles pickets with pickets from the San Francisco Mailers Union -- pickets who would keep all union members out of the building legally.

The other unions joined the picket lines and began a hectic rush to set up joint operations on the ground floor of the Newspaper Guild's building behind The Chronicle at 433 Natoma St. A commissary was set up, a publicity operation launched, 2 pickets from 12 unions moved in and out, around-the-clock.

The unions, if they are to win, must have two things: tight unity and support from a public that never has had much reason to love the publishers of its daily papers.

DIVIDE, CONQUER

Thus, the publishers are attempting to split the unions, and to appeal to a public that, whether it loves them or not, is interested primarily in getting its papers back, whatever the alleged harm to those who put out the papers.

Outwardly, the unions seem to be accomplishing their purpose. Even union officers privately concede surprise at the cooperation among unions, especially among members of often hostile blue-collar craft unions and white-collar Guild members.

Too, food and money is flowing into strike headquarters regularly from outside sources -- hot dogs from the Doggie Diner, desserts from the Blue Fox, coffee from arch capitalist Lou Lurie who thought it worthwhile to bring in his first donation personally and pose for news photographers.

But the publishers are banking on time. As the strike goes on, the strikers' enthusiasm will lessen; it always does. For now, anyway, the publishers are trying to wear down their employees and push the public's patience to the trying point.

They have refused to negotiate with the mailers for almost a week now. Meanwhile, they chip away at the unity, suggesting repeatedly to interviewers that none of the unions but the mailers has any grievance with them, and playing

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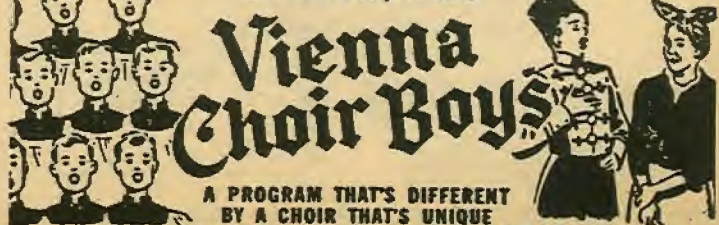
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After the merger

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on general public opinion by also suggesting that the strike may kill still another San Francisco newspaper.

No one knows how long they'll keep it up, but it's clear that neither the Printing Company nor the Mailers Union is in any hurry

to compromise. Neither has changed its basic position, and it isn't even certain when they will sit down and talk together again.

Many strikers are convinced the publishers have adopted this position because they have strike insurance that will at least greatly minimize their losses for as long as three months. But no one has been able to prove it.

Others feel the strike will not be settled until there is a settle-

ment of what is now an even tighter deadlock at the Herald-Examiner.

Still others bank on Mayor Joseph Alioto to move in and settle it. Like any other would-be mediator, however, Alioto does not want to enter until both sides invite him. He has asked them, but both turned him down and, although he possibly could use his considerable influence to get them to invite him, this appears unlikely at the moment.

A very real fear at strike headquarters is that Alioto may be forced to move in nevertheless, because of strikebreakers.

Alioto would have behind him an untested ordinance that prohibits the hiring of "professional strikebreakers" -- defined as those who have worked two or more times in the past five years for any struck firm anywhere.

The ordinance probably could be circumvented. But what could not be circumvented would be the violence that strikebreakers invariably cause. It erupted in San Francisco just four years ago, prior to the adoption of the ordinance, when the city's print shops brought in non-union replacements for striking ITU members, and union leaders warn it would erupt again.

They have threatened, in fact, to call a general strike if the Printing Company does bring in strikebreakers. There's more bark than bite in these threats so far. But they're not as idle as they might appear -- not when the leader making the loudest noise is the chief western representative of the Teamster Union's National office, Jack Goldberger, of the Newspaper Drivers.

The strike, too, may drag on long enough to involve the Oakland Tribune and San Jose Mercury-News. The contract that covers the mailers in San Francisco also covers mailers at those papers. The union has avoided striking them, because they usually follow the pattern of any settlement agreed to in San Francisco and because of the obvious problems of extending the strike. But how much longer can the unions wait?

How much longer can the public wait for the daily newspapers which, however imperfect, it needs badly?

"As long as it takes to answer this question once and for all," says an official deeply involved in the dispute:

"How tough are the publishers, how tough are the unions?"

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